LACY
The Two Friends

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FRENCH'S STANDARD DRAMA.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

A Domestic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY ROPHINO LACY.

NEW-YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
122 NASSAU-STREET.

PRICE, 12½ CENTS.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

AMBROSE	Mr. G. Barrett.
HERBERT	" Flynn.
VALENTINE	" McKinney
ELEANOR	Mrs. E. Knight.
Rose	" Flynn.

COSTUMES, MODERN.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; C. *Centre* C. D. *Centre Door*.

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THE TWO FRIENDS.

ACT I.

Scene I.—Front Chamber.

Enter Rose, r. h.

Rose. There's brother Ambrose busy, and Valentine absent; a very gay beginning, indeed, to any promised happiness. I cannot help wondering at what keeps Valentine so long to-day; every other day, much before this hour, he has always been at my side, yet this day, of all days, the eventful day, no less a day than my wedding-day, he is away; very pretty conduct, indeed. I lose all patience, and I am sure if he delays much longer, I shall not greatly care, whether I am married or not. I am neither apprised of one thing or the other. I dare say he wants to keep me in ignorance of everything before I am married. Well, I'll not be angry with him to-day, but I'll quarrel with him to-morrow for this, and that will be one consolation. (*clock strikes ten*) Ten o'clock, I declare. Monstrous! Oh, here he comes at last, the dear wretch; I feel almost inclined to forgive him.

Enter Valentine, l. h.

Val. Ah, my dear Rose, I thought I never should have got here.

Rose. And I should like to know what kept you so long?

Val. Bless you, I've been to thirty different places, but I've such news about our marriage. I have been to the lawyers, and I have been to the parsons, and it's all arranged, all's fixed, and 2 o'clock is to be the identical hour. If we are a minute after that at the church, we shall be a minute too late.

Rose. At two o'clock? that's a long time to wait, Valentine!

Val. Pho! the time will soon pass away, our happiness will be complete, our fates will at last be joined, and oh, my lovely Rose. (*Going to embrace her.*)

Rose. Now, Valentine, do behave, and be patient, will you? there will be plenty of time to show affection when we are married, you know.

Val. Well, but Rose, let's be happy now, the time approaches quickly, so let us keep up our spirits, and be merry and gay.

Rose. Be gay indeed! I wonder how you can talk of such a thing. I am quite nervous when I think of such a thing. Marriage is a very serious affair. I am very serious about it. I can think of nothing else.

Val. That's just like me, for I can think of nothing else. I had no sleep last night, nor I can't remain two minutes together in the same place. I've been all in a tremor ever since the day was fixed. Ah! now the fatal hour is drawing nigh ——

Rose. Hey! the what, Valentine?

Val. Fatal! did I say fatal? Oh, no; the rapturous moment, I meant.

Rose. Yes, Valentine, and if you have to go any where else, don't be out of the way at the time, but remember two o'clock.

Val. Remember! bless you I shall never forget it; I'm so happy, that everything around appears to me like a dream.

Rose. Indeed! It must be a very pleasant dream then, I trust.

Val. Oh, yes, very agreeable! though I feel as if something was the matter with my head; it spins round, and I look at everything, but can see nothing, just as if I was asleep with my eyes open.

Rose. Then I'll advise you to wake as fast as you can.

Val. Oh! I'll be bound that marriage will waken me; but where is Mr. Ambrose, your brother?

Rose. Oh, he'll be with us in a minute or two. My dear brother, how kind he has acted towards us. Oh, I shall never forget how much I owe him.

Val. And how much I owe him, too. I am indebted to him for all the happiness I now enjoy. Did he not give you to me? Oh, my sweet Rose. (*Going to embrace.*)

Rose. Be quiet, Valentine, and leave me alone till after we are married. Ambrose is as you say, a dear, kind brother, and my heart does so ache when I think of leaving him.

Val. What, your heart ache on your wedding day, Rose?

Rose. Why, you know a little regret is but natural. He has always supplied the place of a father to me. he loves me dearly, and being the only surviving branch of our family, he has, in every instance, consulted my most trifling wish, and this day I hope he has forever fixed my happiness, by giving me to you.

Val. Have you no other relative then than your brother Ambrose, Rose?

Rose. None. Our uncle, who brought us up, died in Russia, ten years ago, leaving to my brother his entire property, who then came to England and settled here, where you first became acquainted with me, you know.

Val. Yes, and I don't want to know what I do know, but what I don't know, so tell me Rose, did your parents die abroad?

Rose. Alas, yes! my brother often speaks of our misfortunes before we came here, having been very melancholy. I was too young for them to make much impression upon me. I scarcely remember their occurrence. All that I do know is that my father died in India, my poor mother perished at sea, and since their deaths my brother's attentive care has amply supplied to me the place of both my lost parents.

Val. And now I'm to be your future guide and master. Oh! bless you, I'll be such a husband. If you do all that I require, you shall have everything your own way, and when you wish for anything, and I have no objection to your having it, you shall have it, and we shall be as happy as the day is long. It's a long time to wait 'till two o'clock, Rose, but it will come at last.

Rose. Oh! I hope it will, I wish my brother was going to be married with us. What a delightful family wedding it would be!

Val. Ay, and how encouraging to see other people set us the example. Do you think he has any thoughts about marriage, Rose?

Rose. Don't know what his thoughts may be, but I have long suspected there is a certain lady in the case.

Val I know whom you mean; the sister of Mr. Herbert, his partner.

Rose. The same, Miss Elinor.

Val. Ay, Miss Elinor, oh, she is the most lovely and delightful woman in all the world, the most ——

Rose. Eh! What! What, Valentine?

Val. No, no; except you—except you, Rose.

Rose Well, I think you might have remembered I was present.

Val. Why, how cross you are, I shall be having you jealous too, and fretful, I suppose.

Rose. That depends upon how you behave yourself. I havn't forgot that you kept me so long waiting this morning.

Val. There again! Well, I didn't think you were so peevish.

Rose. Then you shouldn't say anything to put me out of temper.

Val. But you put yourself out of temper, and are angry and cross for trifles.

Rose. Well, that shows that I love you.

Val. Then I wish you would love me, without showing it.

Rose. So I will then, and there (*giving her hand*) now we are friends again, and I'll not quarrel with you before two o'clock.

Val. Dear, oh dear. I am so happy! Oh, here comes Mr. Ambrose.

Enter Ambrose, R. H.

Am. Well, Rose, well Valentine; how's the market of love this morning? (*Crosses to* c.) Valentine, your hand. The day of joy has duly arrived, and in consigning my sister to you, I bestow on you the omnium of my life's comfort. Treat her as she deserves, and in the sum total of your felicity I shall endeavor to forget my own loss.

Val. Dear sir, you are so kind and good that if I did not respect your sister for herself, I should for you.

Am. Then this day shall be one of general happiness; have everything ready; be prepared, for the ceremony is to take place at two o'clock.

Rose. Oh, dear brother, thank you, thank you.

Val. Oh, law! I wish the time was near. I am afraid if I remain idle, till then, I shall go almost out of my senses.

Am. Then leave Rose to her preparations; go down to the harbor and enquire whether the ship, with our freight on board, is within sight yet, and then meet me and we'll complete the contract at the lawyer's. (*retire up.*)

Val. I will, sir, (*kisses her hand*) Good bye, Rose, good bye.

Rose. Good bye (*calling him back*) Valentine; remember, two o'clock.

Val. Yes! and I dare say I shall remember two o'clock after we are married. [*Exit Valentine*, L. H.

Am. He'll not forget, I warrant. In the mean time go on with your preparations, and I'll follow Valentine to the quay, and see about my ship.

Rose. Ship! oh brother, never care about your ship, what's the use of thinking of your ship 'till my marriage is over.

Am. Not care about my ship! only that your head is too full of matrimony to expect anything reasonable from you ——

Rose. Well, well, I'll be patient now, and obey. (*aside*) After marriage tho', it shall be otherwise! When you are out, shall you call any where else, brother?

Am. Yes, I think I'll just step and see if friend Herbert's at home.

Rose. And if *he* shouldn't happen to be at home, don't forget to enquire after Miss Elinor, brother. (*archly.*)

Am. (*Smiling.*) Go along with you, mind your own entries and don't meddle with mine.

Rose. (*Laughing*) Well, good bye, 'till two o'clock, and remember to return early, brother, for you know I'm to be married exactly at two o'clock. [*Exit Rose*, R. H.

Am. This will be a busy day, 'tis near eleven, at two Rose is to be married—that account will be closed and I left alone, a poor, solitary devil of a bachelor. I wish I was going to be married at the same time with the happy pair; marrying in a party would make things look less desperate. Oh, Miss Elinor, I wish you were in the market, I'd bid sixty per cent. above the invoice price. I must make up my mind at once; there is no marrying without a little trouble, but if I can make up my mind to come strait to the point, if the delicious fruit should be obtainable—if she should say, yes, I'll become a subscriber in the book of Hymen, but should she say, no, I must e'en remain a bachelor, and turn up my nose at matrimony like the rest of them. [*Exit* L. H.

Scene II.—*Room with open Centre Doors backed: Bureau,* L. H. U. E.; *Writing Materials, Paper, Ledger, Books, &c. on table* L. 2d E.; *Chair,* L; *Table and Chair* R; *a Gold Chain on Bureau; £300 bill; quantity of Bank Notes; Herbert discovered seated at table,* L. H., *reading a letter.*

Her. Yes, he asks my sister's hand in marriage; he is an

excellent young man; ay, and a rich man; with what plea, then, what show of justice can I refuse so unobjectionable an offer? I, Herbert, Captain of a privateer, no more. Accept or reject, I must. I cannot sport with the feelings of an honorable man. I will write to him—it is my only course. I will inform him of the truth, and the secret so long kept from Elinor must be declared at last. I tremble and—fire and death! the day on which I first boarded the enemy, and pierced with wounds, amid carnage and smoke, tore down the conquered flag, I felt less pain than in answering this letter. (*writing.*) I cannot proceed—I will not. I will refer him to Elinor herself. And must I consent to part from her? Oh, no! her cares and affections are necessary to my existence. How bitterly do I now repent the error I have committed! I should have confided to Elinor herself, that she was not my sister, but was fearful that such a disclosure would have parted us forever. Year after year has passed, and she has imperceptibly grown up from infancy to womanhood I have concealed from her the secret of my love, and she supposing me her brother regards me only with a sister's affection, whilst I adore her; and yesterday, when I received this letter containing an offer of marriage from Wilford, I couldn't help seizing my pistols with the intention of calling him to account. It must be disclosed, and Elinor shall know all. Yes, this day I will summon up courage, and Elinor shall know the secret so long concealed. I am resolved. Ah, she comes.

Enter Elinor, R. H., *embroidery in hand.*

ELINOR. Brother, good morning.

HER. (*At Ledger.*) What, always disturbed! (*fretful.*)

ELINOR. Nay, I came but to say, that breakfast is ready. (*mildly*)

HER I can't come yet. I'm busy, very busy, but you needn't wait; nothing hinders you, *you* can breakfast.

ELINOR. Oh, never mind me, I'd rather wait, I have no appetite without we breakfast together.

HER. Indeed! forgive me, dear Elinor, I was busy, my love, or ——

ELINOR. Oh, yes, I see that clear enough, and very busy too, for you have never bid me good morning as you always do, Herbert.

HER. Havn't I indeed?

ELINOR. No, that you havn't; but no matter, don't let me disturb your momentous affairs of two and two make four. Dot and carry one. Nine times five are five times nine. (*laugh*) Go on with your work, and I'll sit down by you, and finish this little embroidery at your side, (*drawing a chair near him*) oh, but without making the smallest, smallest noise to disturb you.

HER. My kind Elinor! (*aside*) Heaven's how can I give up this happiness—this sweet, endearing affection? And, pray what are you doing there, Elinor?

ELINOR. Only a little for you, brother! And pray what are you doing? (*looking over*) Oh, what columns of figures, just like a flight of wild ducks; what are you always poring over that big book for, Herbert?

HER. I'm making up the accounts for the inspection of my partner, Ambrose.

ELINOR. Well, and brother, tell me now, are we very fortunate—very rich?

HER. Judge for yourself; our own shares comes to £5000. There, Elinor, what think you of that, for a man who two years since, did not possess a shilling in the world?

ELINOR. Is it possible?

HER. Yes, Elinor, and for all this good fortune I am indebted to Ambrose; he it was first lent me money to advance and promote my welfare. By prudence and care he succeeded, whilst I heedlessly exposed the property he had lent me in wild and desperate ventures.

ELINOR. Oh, yes, you were always led away by hazardous and foolish speculations.

HER. Too much so, indeed; and but for the kindness of Ambrose, bitterly should I have paid for it. It was but two years back, that we equally shared our profits, and with my portion I ventured upon an undertaking against his advise. He argued, and attempted to prevent my trying my wild scheme. Well, I would, I did—it failed, and I was ruined. Whilst maddened with rage, Ambrose came, forced half of his untouched share upon my acceptance, and would hear of no refusal.

ELINOR. Well!

HER. I was obliged to accept it, secretly intending to return it to the noble giver as soon as fortune and opportunity

permitted. I am now enabled to repay his generosity, which I intend doing this day, though he little dreams of it: even my losses have not been sustained in vain. I remember my last scheme with dread, and ever since that occurrence, I have never ventured on anything without consulting Ambrose.

ELINOR. There, brother, I think you are right; oh, what a good heart he has—now, more than ever, shall I love Ambrose.

HER. How! love him? Love Ambrose? (*rises and comes down*)

ELINOR. To be sure I do; aye, and dearly does he love me, too—he tells me so every day.

HER. Tells you so? I never heard him!

ELINOR. Oh, no! when you are present, he talks of nothing but commerce, invoices, cottons, sugars and indigo, but when we are alone, oh, then ——

HER. Can it be possible, Ambrose, my friend harbor a thought of baseness—if it were true!

ELINOR. Why, dear brother, what ails you?

HER. Nothing! only a sudden pain in my heart! it will soon pass away; what, suspect my friend, my benefactor of unworthiness? Oh, no! Ambrose feels towards us both the affection of a brother, but here is something of more serious import (*angrily*) this letter.

ELINOR. Dear Herbert, what means this letter; why so angry?

HER. It concerns you, Elinor, as much as me.

ELINOR. Concerns me!

HER. Yes, it is from Mr. Wilford, the young officer whom we have lately so frequently encountered in our walks.

ELINOR. What, he with whom you quarreled, and was going to fight, merely because he looked at me?

HER. Yes, Elinor, I was wrong; he now asks you of me in marriage.

ELINOR. Indeed! (*joyfully*) a proposal of marriage! oh, how happy I am.

HER. Happy. Confusion! (*aside.*)

ELINOR. Yes, so happy, brother, for I feared it was a challenge, but you will answer it, brother, will you not?

HER. What shall I say to it?

ELINOR. Oh, that he is very kind.

HER. Very.

ELINOR. And that he does us great honor.

HER. Very.

ELINOR. That we feel much gratified.

HER. Very much.

ELINOR. But that ——

HER. But what?

ELINOR. That I don't intend to marry, but my desire is to remain with you for life.

HER. Is it true, is it possible?

ELINOR. Is it so strange! Why, you, Herbert, you have determined not to marry. 'Tis true you never told me so yourself, but I have heard of it for all that. I'll follow your example, brother, for whilst we are so happy, why should we change? A brother and sister living under the same roof, in amity and love, can there be anything sweeter in the whole world? Oh, I am sure there cannot.

HER. You are right, Elinor, very right, I am very happy.

ELINOR. Aye, are you not, Herbert? do I not manage our little household very well?

HER. Yes, yes, dear Elinor.

ELINOR. I am not extravagant.

HER. No, you are all goodness, all that you should be, all I could wish you. Wilford shall have his answer; oh, if you knew how happy that answer made me.

ELINOR. Does it, indeed?

HER. Yes, Elinor, but were I to say *why*.

ELINOR. And wherefore not? Am I not deserving of your confidence.

HER. My confidence? Yes, yes, Elinor, and you shall know. (*aside.*) Ah my boasted courage, where art thou now? This moment to me is an awful one. I will disclose to you that which will decide my future happiness. Yes, you shall know all. Never yet was brother ——

AM. (*Without.*) Herbert! Where are you? Capital news.

Enter Ambrose, C. D.

ELINOR. 'Tis Mr. Ambrose!

AM. Yes, my own identical self. Capital news. I've been to the harbor; the vessel, with that capital cargo on board, has shown signals, and in a few hours she will be in port.

HER. Indeed!

Am. Yes, oh! she's a capital ship. There is on board upwards of £2000 belonging to us, on our own account. If we proceed so successfully we shall soon be able to freight a vessel of our own. Then how delightful it will be to hear persons say, "Whose ship is that?" "That ship? What, don't you know whose ship that is? Why, bless you, it belongs to the house of Ambrose, Herbert & Co.

Her. Only to see the ambition of commerce.

Am. And show me a nobler ambition in the world, than that of promoting the comfort of the human race, of increasing the laudable industry of mankind, of contributing to the welfare of the universe.

Her. And of disinterestedly filling our own pockets at the same time.

Am. Why, to be sure, that is not the most disagreeable part of the business.

Elinor. Come now, gentlemen, you must let me be admitted into the firm, and that it may be useful, in some way, you must allow me to christen the first ship.

Am. So you shall; only let me caution you to give it a good name. The best possession on change or off change, in trade or out of trade, is a good name; it must be something catching, something highsounding. What do you think of the Hippopotamus.

Her. Nonsense, no!

Am. Well then, the Royal King.

Her. Royal what?

Elinor. No, Mr. Ambrose, it shall have a simpler title, it shall be called (*crosses to* c.) "The Two Friends." (*taking their hands.*)

Am. Excellent! very good! I should have puzzled my head for a month, and not have hit upon anything half so appropriate. Very good, and after dinner, the first toast we drink, shall be, success to the "Two Friends."

(*Herbert and Ambrose say this together.*)

Am. But you were at your accounts. I trust I have not intruded. I don't inconvenience you, I hope, by remaining?

Her. Not in the least!

Am. Just passing your door, I determined to pop up and pay you a friendly visit; so having made up my mind to pop up, up I pop'd—by the bye cottons are falling; coffee

sales are good; I've had an offer of prime indigo at —— (*whisper*) What do you think of that?

Elinor. Upon my word, Mr. Ambrose, your visits of friendship are more like commercial conferences, than what you term them.

Am. Oh! bless you, no! these things are interesting to every one. My dear friend, I must apprise you of one thing. I am going to marry my sister Rose, to-day, to young Valentine, whom you have frequently seen.

Her. How?

Am. Yes, she's going to be married this day, at two o'clock.

Elinor. And is it only to-day that you let us know, Mr. Ambrose?

Am. I only knew it myself, to-day! I saw my consent would make Rose happy. So having made up my mind to come straight to the point, I determined to complete the transaction at once.

Elinor. Rather a hasty arrangement, I think, Mr. Ambrose.

Am. Bless you, the parties like it all the better for that, and I think too, that when a bargain is once struck, the sooner you come to a good settlement the better. In such an affair I should be hasty myself; and when *I* marry, it shall not be my fault if everything is not over in half an hour.

Her. And pray, friend Ambrose, how did you discover the affection of Rose for Valentine? What led to it?

Am. You must know that I was hard at work at my ledger, with Rose sitting near me sewing, when I heard her sigh, and turning to her, saw she was crying. Rose, says I, I wish you wouldn't cry, you put me out, and so she did, for I was obliged to add up one column five different times. "Now don't cry, I say." "I can't help it," said she, "for Valentine's going abroad." "Oh, oh! you love Valentine." "Yes, I do!" You must know this Valentine is a good natured youth, the son of old Meltall, the Tallow Chandler, who failed a few months ago. Well, I saw her happiness was ...rned; so having determined to come straight to the ...nt, I left my addition, put on my hat, and walked direct ...o Valentine's. "Valentine," says I, "is it true that you love my sister?" "Yes, I do," says he —"And yet you are going abroad?" "Yes!" "What for?" "To push my fortune and return here in hopes of deserving her." Hem.—

"Valentine, suppose I were to give you £2000 ready money down, without discount"—"I'd refuse it," said he. "Oh, but if I were to top my sister Rose into the bargain!" "I should be the happiest of men." He was going to fall at my feet, I made him fall into my sister's arms; he opened an account with her directly; a balance was struck in his favor instantly. I have yet to go to the lawyer's, and the wedding's to take place at 2 o'clock, and after that the wedding dinner, and after that the wedding dance, and after that, the—hem—hem—the—a-hem. Herbert, my boy, give me your hand; I confess the affair has been a little hurried, but I hope the transaction will go off smoothly and to the satisfaction of the parties.

Her. I wish I had known of this before, as I should have given the wedding feast.

Am. What an extravagant dog, to think of throwing away your money in such a nonsensical manner.

Her. This comes well from you, who have given your sister £2000.

Am. Oh, bless you, that's a different thing, stock in hand, you know. I must say that this marriage is not exactly what I could have wished. There has, as I may say, been an error, somehow, crept into the account. If I had chosen for Rose, Valentine is certainly not the man I should have selected.

Her. Indeed! whom should you have wished, then?

Am. You, to be sure! To deal frankly with you, I had almost set my heart upon a match between you and Rose, and have done everything to bring you together.

Elinor. (*Comes down*) And pray, Mr. Ambrose, may I ask why you concerned yourself in that matter?

Am. Concern myself?

Elinor. Yes! Why endeavor to force them to marry in opposition to their own wishes?

Am. Force them? I didn't wish to force them; only as Herbert and I are friends, I thought we might strengthen the bonds by becoming brothers.

Elinor. But that was impossible. Mr. Ambrose, and you must have known it; and it was very wicked of you, very wicked, indeed, to attempt to render the poor girl miserable.

Am. Miserable? I don't want to make any body miserable! Why, Herbert, what's the matter with your sister, I never saw her so before?

HER. Oh, it s merely friendship for Rose, nothing else.

AM Friendship for Rose is very well, but there's no occasion to snap my nose off. The speculation failed ; the goods are otherwise disposed of, but as for our being brothers—hem—hem—hem; there may be another way of coming to a settlement on that head. (*looks at Elinor*) Hem ! !

Enter Rose through C. D.

ROSE. Oh, brother, what has kept you so long? I enquired at your office, for you. but when I found you were not there, I knew where to look for you, I was sure you would be here. Oh, Mr. Herbert, good morning. Good morning, Miss Elinor. Well, this is to be the happy day ; have you heard, eh, havn't you ?

AM. Oh, yes, they know, for I told them everything.

ROSE I am sorry for it. for I thought I should have had the pleasure of telling them myself. Oh, Elinor, Valentine is such a dear little fellow. You know that it is Valentine ?

ELINOR. Yes, Rose, we do know, and very sincerely we congratulate you on your happiness.

ROSE. Oh, thank you, thank you ! Brother, what a slow creature you are ; staying here. as if there was nothing of consequence to be done, and Valentine waiting for you at the lawyer's all this time, and I dare say so impatient, poor fellow —perhaps he will go mad.

AM. Mad. Nonsense !

ROSE. Oh, but it's no nonsense, brother, and you promised to go to him at the lawyer's, you know, and now you are here instead of there ; but you are always out of the way when sugars and cottons are not in the question.

AM. What now, it's your turn to find fault ! the deuce is in the women this morning. But I am going to the lawyer's, and what's better, I'm taking your portion along with me.

ROSE. Oh, that's a dear brother, you are so kind ; but go now, will you ? and do make haste, for it's a shocking thing to be kept so long waiting. and I do pity Valentine !

AM. Yes, he's very much to be pitied, poor fellow ! Come, Herbert, you are cashier. so hand over the needful.

HER. (*Taking gold chain from bureau*) First permit Elinor and myself to present a wedding gift. to the bride, as a trifling token of our friendship.

Rose. Thank you, Mr. Herbert, thank you! Oh, what a beautiful gold chain.

Am. Why, Herbert, what an extravagant rascal you are.

Elinor. Oh, my amiable, generous brother!

Her. Nay, 'tis your gift, Elinor, not mine, for 'twas for you I purchased it. (*retires and takes notes out of bureau; employs himself at* L. H. *table.*)

Am. Look there, now, he gives you a gold chain fit for an Alderman to be hanged in, because you're his friend's sister. What's his own sister to expect when she's married, I wonder? (*crosses to* C.) Hem! Miss Elinor, it would be well for you to make up your mind, you have an excellent example before your eyes, if you would but profit by it and be married, too.

Rose. Oh, yes, Miss Elinor, you must get married, (*admiring chain*) it is so nice; see how it shines, don't it? (*crosses to* C.) and when you are inclined to treat us with a wedding, you won't want for lovers. I can tell you.

Am. No, I'll answer for that! I know one that would be happy to ——

Her. (*Uneasy at Ambrose's attention to Elinor*) Come, Ambrose, come and help me to look over this money. I don't know whether I have counted it right or not.

Am. (*Goes to table, takes up notes, but lays them down again and comes down to Elinor.*) And those whom I speak of, love you for yourself; as I may say for the excellent quality of the goods, and not on account of your brother's fortune.

Her. (*Uneasy*) Now, Ambrose, I'm making up this account solely for you, and if you don't choose to assist me, I'll proceed no farther.

Am. I'll come, directly; I'm coming, and —— (*goes to table and returns*) You'll think, Miss Elinor, of what I've said about a good husband at your leisure. Hem!—and if you do make your mind up, I think I have one in my eye, that would exactly suit you, to a tittle.

Rose. I'll be bound I can guess the person.

Am. I'll be bound you cannot.

Rose. I know who.

Am. You do not.

Rose. Yes, brother.

Am. No, sister.

Her. Come, come, Ambrose, do make haste.

Am. (*Going to table returns*) You'll not forget.

Her. Zounds, have done trifling! when we have business in hand I think proper attention should be paid, at all events.

Am. Well, well, I am paying attention to it; what the deuce is the matter this morning? First the sister and then the brother, (*goes to table*) let me see, (*counts notes*) £1,700 in notes, and £300 in cash, I suppose.

Her. Or what's the same, this bill for the amount, which I must receive from Scrapeall, the merchant.

Rose. Oh, pray, pray, do make haste and get it, then, for Valentine's waiting at the lawyers all this time, and it will be soon two o'clock. What tiresome animals you merchants are!

Am. And what tiresome animals you brides are! Come, Herbert, despatch, and whilst you receive your cash at Scrapeall's, I'll look over the accounts and write an acquittal.

Her. Zounds, there's a cashier there will detain me a whole hour.

Rose. That's the very reason you should make more haste, and as you pass our door, Mr. Herbert, you can leave me at home. Run fast to the lawyer's, brother! Good morning, Miss Elinor, remember two o'clock; that's the hour I expect you! Mind, not a minute later, for we are to be married exactly at two o'clock. [*Exit with Herbert.*

Am. (*Placing chairs*) Hem! hem! To say the truth, Miss Elinor, I am not sorry I am left alone with you.

Elinor. And may I ask why, Mr. Ambrose?

Am. What a plump question! Why, you see, Miss Elinor, I am a plain man of business, and I always make up my mind to go straight to the point. The little affair I want to speak to you about is this, I am an humble person, but I trust I have a good heart; 'tis not a showy commodity, but of good quality, and on the average, as fair an article as any in the market.

Elinor. Your heart, Mr. Ambrose, does credit to human nature; it is great without pride, and noble without ostentation.

Am. It is, I hope, what an honest man's heart should be—errors excepted—Miss Elinor. I have no great ambition to appear what I am not. I am, as you know, the friend of your brother; our partnership has flourished, business has

been excellent, but somehow I feel I am not quite so happy as I used to be.

ELINOR. How, Mr. Ambrose, not happy?

AM. No—yes—that is—I find I want something I have not got, and I begin to think the article I require is a good wife. Now, if you have no particular objection, we may soon wind up matters to our mutual satisfaction; for—for—you are the woman I love, and will suit me to a tittle.

ELINOR. What, this from Mr. Ambrose? I can scarcely recover from my surprise! make me an offer of marriage—so direct a proposal at once?

AM. It's my way of doing business. I don't like round about transactions; you are now duly apprised of the contents of my heart, the rest is easily carried over. I am a safe man; not here to-day and gone to-morrow. As to the situation of affairs, I can safely say, that my future prospects are good; my fortune is ample, my reputation unquestionable, and my heart wholly consigned to you, which if duly honored by your acceptance will render my happiness complete.

ELINOR. Mr. Ambrose, I scarcely know how to express my gratitude for the preference you have shown me; but why have you not spoken of this to my brother?

AM. No, I knew better than that! your brother is my friend, fancies himself my debtor; and if I had said to him, Herbert, I love your sister, he would have replied, "take her, she is yours." No, I determined first to ascertain your sentiments; so having made up my mind to come straight to the point, I thought to myself, I'll speak to Miss Elinor, and if she says yes, we shall soon wind up matters to our satisfaction, and bring the arrangement to a final settlement.

ELINOR. Mr. Ambrose, my frankness shall equal yours; let me not lose your friendship, when I disclose to you, that I have no idea of marriage.

AM. I see you love another.

ELIMOR. No, were I to choose, you are the man I should prefer; but I must add that I am anxious to remain with my brother, and can only respect you as his and my friend, no further. Forgive this frank avowal. I have no love for you, but shall ever esteem and regard you—in short, I have nothing to offer but my friendship.

AM. Accepted! your friendship then must satisfy me, (*taking her hand*) happy in what you have deigned to confer

(*Enter Herbert; stops short at observing them*) I shall remember this kind avowal with gratitude. (*kisses her hand.*)

Her. What do I hear?

Elinor. My brother!

Am. So much the better; he will be delighted at the state of his dear friend, if you did but know ——

Her. Leave me, sir!

Am. Did you speak to me?

Elinor. Brother!

Her. Be silent! meddle with what concerns you.

Am. Why, what the devil's the matter? Oh, I know, I see. Nay, Herbert, you are so very particular! If you are angry with me, for kissing your sister's hand ——

Her. You are mistaken, sir—deceived; my sister is her own mistress, and not answerable for her conduct to me. She may give ear to any body—every body; her behavior is to me perfectly indifferent—perfectly, perfectly.

Elinor. What can this mean?

Her. But what I am angry at, is having a partner hourly neglecting his business. (*goes to table and looks at ledger*) I thought it, I knew it; the account is not balanced, the receipt not signed; but you have doubtless had more pleasing and more important affairs to claim your attention.

Am. Law, what a foolish quarrel is this! Whether the receipt is signed now or an hour hence, what does it matter?

Her. It matters everything—every day it is the same; the most serious affairs are neglected, the most important concerns are left in confusion. Everything depends upon my entire guidance, whilst my gallant partner is throwing away his time with my amiable sister.

Am. And it is at the end of seven years that you complain for the first time?

Her. Because there is an end to all things—because such conduct is unbearable, and not to be endured.

Am. Come, come, sir, you are now assuming too much.

Her. If my speech offends you, sir, you know your redress; it is necessary we should come to a proper understanding. This day you shall receive the money I owe you, in addition to your share of the profits, and in future we will work no longer together.

Elinor. Brother!

Am. How!

Her. The thing must end; when partners can't agree, it is better they should see one another no more.

Am. What! drive me from your house, shut against me the doors that have been seven years open? refuse me the hand which for seven years I have grasped in friendship? You cannot mean it.

Her. I do mean it. My hand *is* withdrawn, my heart *is* closed, my door *is* open.

Am. This to me, this to the friend, who—I could have suffered much—remember, Herbert, remember it is you that have forced me from your doors. (*going.*)

Elinor. Nay, Ambrose, let me entreat you not to go—I conjure you to remain.

Am. No, I have been a brother to him; but, 'tis over. I trust I have a proper pride, and if ever I set my foot in these doors again.

Her. So much the better.

Elinor. Brother, for pity's sake!

Am. No. After such treatment, I should be a mean spirited coward to——don't imagine I regret parting with you.

Her. Nor I with you, sir.

Am. No, no, I can readily find twenty friends. Twenty—twenty—(*almost sobbing with agitation*) dearer to me than you are.

Her. Take them then, take them, and let me hear no more of you. [*Exit Herbert* L. H. R. E.

Am. 'Tis done, 'tis over, and if ever I again set my foot within these doors may—— (*going, sees Elinor*) heaven bless you. Miss Elinor; your friendship I shall ever cherish with kindness, with fondness—perhaps affection. Oh, heaven! (*Bursts into tears and rushes off.*)

[*Elinor sinks into* R. H. *chair.*

[End of act I.]

ACT. II.

Scene I.—*Front Chamber.*

Table and chairs on. Rose *discovered in Wedding dress seated at table* R.

Rose. Oh dear, how awful it is to wait the approach of one's wedding hour! Will two o'clock never come! I never long'd for any day to end so much as this. I should'nt wonder if I'm disappointed after all. Valentine does keep out of the way most unaccountably, and I must say his keeping me in this suspense, on my wedding-day, is most unhandsome, very unhandsome indeed. Now, I dare say, brother's not called at the lawyer's yet—poor Valentine's waiting there, poor Rose is waiting here, and it's very barbarous to be treated so, when one's married for the first time. We seem as if we were already man and wife—for we are never together. The only delightful occurrence as yet, has been the present of this beautiful gold chain. I wouldn't part with it for the world, that I wouldn't.

Enter Ambrose, R. H. *crosses to chair on* L. *of table. Puts down his hat, gloves, &c., in a passion.*

Am. I'll never speak to him again, never, never, never.

Rose. Hey day, what's the matter now I wonder, he seems to be in a strange taking. Have you been to the lawyer's, brother?

Am. Pish!

Rose. Pish! That's a very kind answer, on my wedding-day, I must say, when I'm going to be married at two o'clock.

Am. Pooh!

Rose. Pooh! well I never saw such behavior in all my life.—I won't be treated so, when I'm married, that I won't.

[Ambrose *puts on his hat and is going.*

Rose. Where are you going, brother?

Am. No, no, I'll never go near him. never again.

[*Crosses back and sits.*

Rose. Where's Valentine?

Am. I'll never speak to him again.

Rose. What, Valentine?

Am. A false, unfeeling——

Rose. Who. Valentine?

Am. Dead to every sense of gratitude.

Rose. Oh dear, oh dear! Do you mean my Valentine?

Am. Damn Valentine?

Rose. (*Screams*) Oh! he damns my Valentine; he must be raving to damn my Valentine. In the name of patience, brother, do tell me what has become of him?

Am. I don't know, nor I don't care.

Rose. You may not care, but I do though. I should like to know how I'm to be married without him.

Am. Who's to be married?

Rose. Why, I'm to be married at two o'clock.

Am You shan't be married. Herbert has treated me like a dog, turned from his door, me his best friend.

Rose. I said I should'nt be married after all. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to go and quarrel on purpose, that I mayn't be married, but Iwill though, and I'll be happy, and I'll be gay. (*Cries.*

Am. To turn me from his doors!

Rose. A pretty turn, indeed, to go and quarrel on my wedding-day. But now, brother, things may'nt be as bad as you say—you may be mistaken, you know. Remember how good Herbert was this morning, and how generous he presented me with this gold chain, you know.

Am. You shan't keep it, take it back.

Rose. Oh! what, my chain, my beautiful chain—I couldn't. Indeed I couldn't.

Am. Go, this instant.

Rose. I can't go out in my wedding dress, I can't, nor I won't. [*Crying.*

Am. Go I say, return him his proud present, not one of my family shall accept the smallest trifle from one whose heart is devoid of friendship and feeling.

Rose. Oh, oh, oh, it's very hard indeed. that I'm to pay for your quarrels, I that never fell out with anybody in my life—you ought to be ashamed of yourself. It's cruel to make me cry on my wedding-day, besides it makes one look such a figure, it spoils one's eyes, and makes them look so red. [*Crying.*

[*Enter* Valentine, *goes to* Rose.

VAL. Ah, my darling Rose—Why, what's the matter? what are you crying for?

ROSE. I don't know, nor I don't care.

VAL. You are not crying because we are going to be married?

ROSE. No, I'm crying because we are not going to be married.

VAL. Not going to be married! (*Goes to* AMBROSE.) What is the meaning of this, Mr. Ambrose?

AM. What's that to you—what brought you here—who the devil sent for you?

VAL. I'm struck dumb. I did'nt expect to be surprised before marriage, but I suppose it's part of the ceremony, a sort of Freemason's trial. I have just been at the lawyer's, sir.

AM. Then you may go back again.

VAL. Go back, sir? I've been so often there already, that he swears if I come again, he'll indict me as a nuisance, but I thought after your kindness this morning——

AM. I'm changed since the morning.

VAL. Your intentions are not changed, I hope?

AM. Yes they are.

VAL. And isn't this to be our day of happiness?

AM. No, nobody shall be happy to-day, if I can help it—I'm miserable myself, and I'll make every body miserable about me

VAL. Amiable creature!

ROSE. Never mind, don't say anything to him, Valentine. I never saw him in such a temper before. Now, don't speak to him.

VAL. Oh, but I shall though. I will, I'll let him know that nobody has a right to make you cry but myself.

ROSE. Now don't speak—I tell you it will only make him worse. I can't think what has come to him, he used to be so kind, and so mild, he must have been bitten by a mad dog.

[AMBROSE *again going off*, R. H.

ROSE. Brother, where are you going now?

AM. Nowhere; do you go, nay no entreaties, you shall return that bauble, I'm determined—obstinate! [*Retires.*

ROSE. I know you are obstinate, and it's very cruel to vent your spite on two innocent young creatures, who expected to be married at two o'clock. I say, Valentine, be sure you

don't go till I return. I'll run every step of the road, and be sure to be back by two o'clock. [*Exit* Rose, R.

Val. She's run away. I declare we are like two buckets in a well, we shall never come together. Poor Ambrose, if it is really as Rose says. I feel very nervous. Sir, have you been bitten by a mad dog? [Ambrose *looks up.*] Shall I run anywhere for you, sir?

Am. Run to the devil.

Val. If you mean that I should go to the lawyer's, sir, had not you better come with me?

Am. No!

Val. I have been to the quay, sir, as you desired me, and the adventure will be in the harbor this evening.

Am. Let her sink—I care not—I was happy without riches whilst blest with friends, but now I find that prosperity is not happiness, and friendship but a shadow.

Val. [*ruminating*] Well, I hope it will be settled by 2 o'clock

Am. Talk to me about two o'clock. I cannot remain here, I can scarcely breathe, and my heart seems as if it would burst my bosom.

Val. Shall I go with you, sir?

Am. Come within a mile of me, and I'll knock you down. [*Exit* R.

Val. You must have a precious long arm then; I have had trouble enough, to run into this family, and now if he continues in this humor, the safest thing I can do, is to run out again. I hope he'll be in his senses by two o'clock. If he don't come back, I'll run away with Rose, in spite of brothers, lawyers, or the devil, and I'll run and tell her so.

[*Exit* R.

Scene II.—*Same as* Act 1st.

Herbert *and* Elinor *discovered seated.* Herbert *in* L. *chair,* Elinor *in* R.

Her. [*rises and walks about agitated.*] Friends, fine friends, traitors, to take advantage of the confidence which, like an idiot fool, I reposed in them, to betray me. Oh, world, world! where rogues and villains flourish, and guilt thrives best, the more it looks like honesty. To deceive me,

who day after day, left them together, and while I hugged them to my heart, they serpent like have stung me—but the fault has been my own; I confided where I should have distrusted In tears. ay, you weep for his departure?

El. Yes, and still more because I have seen my brother unjust and cruel for the first time.

Her. 'Twas your own fault for deceiving me.

El. Deceiving you?

Her. Deceive me! you only refused Wilford's offer, because you secretly loved Ambrose, not that I shall hinder your choosing where, or whom you please; but I feel hurt, stung to the heart's core, by your want of confidence.

El. Can you then imagine—

Her. You would probably make me believe, that on this spot, he spoke not of love.

El. Why should I deny it?

Her. I heard it, saw it, I saw him kiss your hand.

El. What you saw I deny not

Her. Then I saw enough to convince me that he is a false villain, who sought to seduce you.

El. He offered me his heart and fortune.

Her. And I arrived at the moment, I suppose, when he thanked you for your acceptance of his heart and fortune.

El. Hear me out, Herbert, he offered his heart, hand, and fortune, and you arrived just at the time that he was acknowledging his gratitude for my candor, and thanking me for my friendship.

Her. He offered you his hand, and you told him —

El. I told him I would accept him as a friend, but never as my husband.

Her. How!

El. I added what you already know, that I did not wish to marry, that I was anxious to remain with you. I own I did not then think you so unkind and cruel. Oh! Herbert, I never saw you so wicked before.

Her. What have I done? whither has passion hurried me? Elinor, I am a wretch unworthy your friendship. Wronged Ambrose, how have I treated him.

El. You have broken with him for ever.

Her. No, no,

El. Driven him from your house.

HER. No, no, I did not, could not, I will not believe it.

EL. The friend of your bosom, to quarrel with him on such a day as this. The day of his family's happiness, the day on which he hoped to see all around him joyful, to send him from your house, oh! Herbert.

HER. Driven him from my house—my best friend—I was mad, Elinor, but I am so no longer. Do you think he will return?

EL. Oh, no, I am sure he will not—he has sworn never again to enter your doors, but were you to go to him, and holding out your hand to him thus, say, Ambrose, behold a repentant friend, your hands would be grasped again in friendship, and your hearts joined in amity and peace

HER. I feel I ought to do so, but I dare not, after what has passed, I should shrink from him with shame.

EL. Then I will go.

HER. My kind sister.

EL. I will say, Ambrose, I come from my brother, he grieves sincerely for what has occurred; pray, pray, forgive him; let us all embrace, and may every unkindness be forgotten.

HER What, embrace! oh, yes, yes, you are right, Elinor, very right, but instead of going to him, suppose you were to write and fully express my contrition. I think it might cause an earlier reconciliation.

EL. As you please, dear brother, I will write then.

HER. Do so; I feel far from well, for I have been somewhat overcome by the events of the morning, the air will—will perhaps restore me. [*Going.*] You will write?

EL. This very moment. You are not angry with me now, Herbert, are you? [*Goes to* HERBERT.

HER. Angry with thee, Elinor! oh! never, never. (*Embracing her affectionately, but instantly receding*) Bless you, Elinor, bless you. [*Exit* C. D.

EL. Now, what in the name of mystery can be the matter with him? I never saw him so before. I feel somewhat strange myself, yet cannot tell why, but just now when he folded me with such fervor in his arms, I involuntarily shrunk from his embrace. I was very happy, but it seemed to me, as if I was doing wrong. Lord, what a fool I am, where can be the harm in embracing one's brother! Well,

I must write my letter. But certainly I should like to know if all sisters feel so to their brothers. I'll question Rose about it. the first moment I see her. Oh, bless my heart. I'm chattering away and never thinking of my letter—positively, I will begin, and now for a great exertion of female effort—I'll not open my mouth these five minutes. [*At table* L. H.

Enter ROSE, C. D.

ROSE. (*crying.*) Oh dear, oh dear! who could have expected this!

EL. Why, my dear Rose, what has happened?

ROSE. You ought to know better than I. since you were by at the time. Brother Ambrose came home from your house in such a pet. But men's dispositions are shocking, they ought to be ashamed of their nasty tempers. They might have waited till the marriage was over.

EL. Be calm, dear Rose, all will shortly be settled.

ROSE. Yes, but will it be settled before two o'clock?

EL. Set your heart at rest; Herbert has recovered his reason, and I hope Ambrose will accept his apology.

ROSE Hope indeed! Hope is nothing at all. I don't know what Valentine will think, poor fellow, he has his share of the sours; you have no idea how my brother treated him, and he has commanded me to return the gold chain Herbert gave me, and I should very much like to know what occasion there is for that—I hav'nt quarrelled with your brother.

EL. My dear Rose, compose yourself. Herbert and Ambrose will soon be reconciled. I was just going to write to your brother.

ROSE. Oh, do try to make them friends before two o'clock, the wedding is positively fixed for that hour, and they may quarrel as soon after as they like, tell them. How came all this hurly-burly about, Elinor?

EL. I hardly know, myself. I was conversing with your brother, and I believe he was kissing my hand.

ROSE. Was that all, and did Herbert fall in a passion for such a trifle? What a fool! I'm sure my brother is a great deal kinder than that. Valentine might kiss my hand until he was tired, and Ambrose would not complain.

EL. And would it cause him no emotion?

ROSE. Emotion! oh, dear, no, or if it did, I never noticed

it; but, Valentine, if any body ever looks at me, he's like a little lion, and he grows so big all of a sudden, not that that sort of humor makes me love him a bit the less, oh, dear no, for the moment he appears unhappy, I'm unhappy too.

El. Ay, my good Rose, well, and you equally partake of your brother's sorrows, do you not?

Rose. Oh, dear, that's quite another thing—I love brother very well, to be sure, but it's not at all like the affection I feel for Valentine.

El. How! is not fraternal love the best, the dearest, the tenderest, and strongest of duties? and your brother, Rose, is he not the constant object of your thoughts?

Rose. Oh, no, I can't swear that he is; to be sure, when he's in my mind, I think of him, and when he happens to be present, but my feelings for Valentine!

El. Valentine!

Rose. Oh, that's quite another thing.

El. Now, but tell me, Rose, when your brother leaves you for two or three days—well then, do you not experience a sinking of the heart, accompanied with great uneasiness, and deep regret?

Rose. Not at all, for I always say, he's sure to come back again, but when Valentine goes. I feel alone, forsaken, as if I had lost every friend I had in the world. During his absence, day and night his image is always before my eyes; then to shorten the time, I go and cry, and make myself miserable, and count the minutes and hours of his absence; but when he returns. I feel so much joy and such rapture that makes me forget everything else, but himself, in the world.

El. (*Horror struck at the idea of her affection for Herbert being criminal.*) Oh! but tell me Rose, when your brother returns and embraces you?

Rose. Oh, I'm not aware of it, but when Valentine does, oh, that's quite another thing.

El. Explain!

Rose. Bless you, I can't well explain. First, I feel a sort of fluttering. my ears go buz, buz, and my heart beats pit pat, pit pat, as if I could not breathe, and sometimes I could cry, without a cause, or laugh without knowing why.

El. Can it be?

Rose. Why, there's nothing astonishing in it, and I'll tell

you the reason—the reason is that I love one as a brother, the other as a lover.

EL. Oh!

ROSE. Gracious powers, are you not well?

EL. Oh. unhappy wretch!

ROSE. Dear Elinor, I hope I have not said anything to offend you. If I have given you any pain, I'm sure I did not mean it.

EL. No, no Rose. I thank you, I thank you; merciful heavens, what a dreadful light breaks in upon me! I must not hesitate, ha! there is one way, and I *will not* hesitate. Rose, will you endeavor to see your brother, and say I want to see him? Do you think he'll come?

ROSE. Oh, yes, I am sure he will, for though he said he'd never come near this house again, he was every moment taking up his hat, as if he could not remain in his own. Now only see if I hav'nt said rightly—look, yonder he comes. Do you speak to him, Elinor. I don't like to meddle with him when he's in these grumpy humors.

EL. Leave us, leave us.

ROSE. I will, and now do you keep your promise, and try to get him in a good temper before two o'clock. If he should speak of the gold chain, say I brought it, and offered it to everybody, but nobody would take it.

[*Going, meets* AMBROSE.

AM. What are you doing here?

ROSE. I a'int doing nothing, brother. (*Passes him in door way.*) I'll go and comfort poor Valentine till two o'clock

[*Exit* ROSE.

EL. Yes, yes, it is decided, (*turning,*) is it you, my dear sir?

AM. I walked out to take the air; passing the door where I've been in the habit of coming daily. by accident I stepped in—pardon me for my mistake—and (*going.*)

EL. Nay, pray do not leave me.

AM. I swore never to see Herbert again, but I did not say I would'nt see you, Miss Elinor; no, I never vowed that, so I will remain whilst you wish it.

EL. Thanks, my sincere thanks. I was going to write and beg you to be reconciled to my brother.

AM. What? after the manner in which he spurned me so

recently; no, Miss Elinor. I can never again be Herbert's friend.

El. Nay, but you will.

Am. Nay, but I will not.

El. Censure his temper but not his heart.

Am. To turn me out of his doors, me, his best friend!

El. He is sensible of his error, give it not a harsher term.

Am. What!

El. Penitent, and self-condemned, he would personally entreat your forgiveness—he feels the madness of his conduct, and would appear before you, to acknowledge his error, but dares not.

Am. What, sensible of his error—where is he?

El. He's not now within, but he will soon return, and then I hope we shall all be friends and happy.

Am. Happy, ay as happy as the day is long—stocks are up again. Sensible of his error, errors are always excepted. I long to shake hands with him. What a passion he was in, and all about nothing—I must see him—I'll go to him.

El. Stay one moment more, the better to see your reconciliation complete—and that you may be better friends than ever. I have a request to make.

Am. Why speak it! all I have in the world belongs to you.

El. You told me this morning that you loved me, that you wished to marry me.

Am. It would have been the happiness of my life to have possessed you.

El. Then hear me, if you still love me, if this poor hand has still any charm for you, take it, I give it freely, 'tis yours.

Am. Now, don't laugh at me, don't jest, or you'll break my heart.

El. I jest not, I am ready to become yours this week, to-morrow, to-day, if so it pleases you.

Am. Oh, my happiness is so great, so unexpected! Heaven grant me strength to bear it, but should you retract——

El. Never, but here, (*goes to table and writes.*) to remove all doubts, take this; my name is signed to that paper, and be the contents what you please, I will fulfil them.

Am. Oh, I'm the happiest dog in the world, I'm afraid my happiness will kill me.

El. Be calm, I must add one condition.

Am Any thing you like.

El. It is, that you ask my brother's consent.

Am. I will.

El. And should he hesitate?

Am. Oh, he won't hesitate.

El. Ay, but should he, tell him I desire it, that it's my heart's wish—do you hear that?

Am. With my heart, as well as my ears. Stay, some one comes—'tis he! stay and hear how delighted he'll be.

El. Oh, no, pray excuse me, (*aside,*) in his presence my courage fails me. [*Exit*, Elinor.

Enter Herbert.

Her. My brother!

Am. My friend!

Her. Do you then forgive me?

Am. To be sure, everything's forgiven, everything's forgotten, but on one condition.

Her Name it.

Am. That we never speak of what's past.

Her. Generous man! But I must tell you what I have suffered, and how happy I should be to prove the warmth of my friendship. Oh, that the means of returning the obligation were in my power, that I might evince my gratitude.

Am. Be happy, then, you have now an opportunity, my long-respected friend, of turning the scale, and throwing all the obligations on my side

Her. Speak. (*Takes A.'s hand.*)

Am I love your sister, give her to me for a wife.

Her How, Elinor? (*Drops his hand.*)

Am. What, the devil, are you going to open a fresh account?

Her. Forgive me, Ambrose, I will deal openly with you, you are all that an honest man should be; if I could give you my sister, it would make me happy, very happy. I have the strongest friendship for you, but I think I know my sister's sentiments, and I will not, cannot constrain her inclinations.

Am. Is that the only cause of your objection?

Her. The only one.

Am. Be happy then, for 'twas Elinor's self that sent me to you.

Her. What say you?

Am. Tell him it is my wish, the wish of my heart.

Her. How?

Am. She certainly did refuse me this morning. there's no denying it, but the market's up again. She has given her own consent. and desired me to obtain yours. Why, what the devil's the matter with you? no further drawback, I hope.

Her. She loves you, you are sure of it? She told you she would be yours?

Am. She told me she would be mine within this hour. Call her. and ask her.

Her. No, 'tis enough, Elinor is yours, her portion has long been ready.

Am. Burn her portion! Do you think I want any thing from you after a gift like this? I knew you would be delighted. I'll procure the license, and be married at the same time with Rose and Valentine, those poor dear children that I treated so harshly—but they shall be happy and joyful now—it would be cursed cruel when a man's happy himself. to make others miserable. I'll return as brisk as a bee, a merry bridegroom. the license in my pocket, the favor in my buttonhole, and the ring in my hand. my boy! [*Exit.*

Her. Can this be Elinor—Elinor who promised but an hour ago, never to leave me! False, perfidious—no, no, I have no right to censure her. Ambrose is her heart's wish, her husband! I am only her brother. She shall at least learn—and wherefore? to part us wider still, to snap even the last tie that binds us. She shall to my death be ignorant of the secret I possess. Yes, Elinor, amid danger and blood I promised thy expiring mother, to watch over thy happiness. I have done so, even at the hazard of my own. and you. who confided her to me. take her to your own guardian care—my oath has been fulfilled. She comes! now up, heart, brave heart support me.

Enter Elinor.

El. (*Much agitated.*) Has Ambrose seen you?

Her. He has.

El. Has he spoken to you?

Her. He has told me all, I have given my consent, and this evening you will be his wife.

EL. 'Tis past then, 'tis over! (*Aside.*)

HER. One word only. I would not reprove you, but why not tell me the truth this morning?—you then said you had no wish to marry.

EL. True, but now it is my wish.

HER. And what has caused this change?

EL. I cannot tell you. Do not ask me, 'tis the only secret I shall ever conceal.

HER Elinor, you then no longer love me.

EL. Not love you? ah, not love you, Herbert? (*Very tenderly, but instantly suppressing her warmth.*) Brother, let it suffice that I wish to marry, and that I wish Ambrose, and none but Ambrose, to be my husband.

HER. Ambrose is an honest man, may he make you happy. (*Takes Parchment out of bureau.*) There, Elinor, 'tis your fortune—I earned it—I saved it for you. This is not the use I thought to make of it—no matter—'tis your wedding-portion—take it.

EL. Ah! brother!

HER. Would it were more, Elinor, for had I millions they should be yours. I need nothing now. Farewell! be happy, and think sometimes of your brother. (*Going.*

EL. Herbert, whither go you?

HER. I know not; far away, on board the first bark that puts to sea.

EL. You abandon this spot for me then. I will go with you.

HER. Too late, too late!

EL. No, no, I will go with you; I will never part from you.

HER. And Ambrose?

EL. I care not.

HER Your love, your intended husband?

EL. My duty is to follow you.

HER. Elinor, listen, and one word will root you to the spot—learn the truth—a truth concealed for years. You have hitherto known me only as your friend, only as your brother—

EL. (*Horror-struck at the idea of his being about to declare a criminal love.*) Ah, finish not, fly, leave me!

HER. Yes, I will fly, Elinor. The love that fills my heart—

EL. (*With averted face and shuddering.*) Go, go.

HER. May wear me to the grave, but I will still pray for your happiness with fervency—and since I must leave you, since we must part forever, know that he who leaves you is not your brother. [*Exit*, C. D.

EL. (*In joyful ecstacy.*) Ha!

Enter AMBROSE, C. D.

AM. The license is here!

EL. (*Utters a shriek and falls senseless on the stage*)

AM. Elinor, revive, revive! (*Raising her*) What can have occured so suddenly? Herbert, Herbert! Elinor, speak, speak to me!

EL. What's the matter? What has happened?

AM. Compose yourself, your friends are near you; your brother will soon return.

EL. Who? (*Collecting her thoughts.*)

AM. Your friend, your brother.

EL. He is not my brother.

AM. Well, don't be angry with him; if he has behaved unlike one, you will forgive him. He is gone but for an instant, he will soon return.

EL. Oh, no, he will never come again!

AM. Never come again?

EL. No, he has gone from me forever!

AM. Nonsense, he'll be here directly. I'll call him back. I'll insure him at any risk. I have to receive you from his hand.

EL. Ha!

AM. (*Runs for a chair.*) You are still faint. Then sit down and revive your spirits. I'll follow your brother—he loves you beyond any being in the world—he's not gone far. I'll find him—I'll tell him you are sick, you are dying—I'll tell him you're already dead. I'll bring him directly.

[*Exit* C.

EL. Oh, miserable, miserable Elinor! why too late have you been told the fatal secret! Too late! too late! Must I then be another's. Never, never! No, Herbert, no, my only thought. I have ever been thine, and will be thine alone.

Enter AMBROSE *and* HERBERT.

EL. Ah, he comes, my own beloved Herbert. (*Embraces*)

AM. Ay, there he is, be happy!

HER. Heard I aright—beloved—beloved by Elinor?

EL. Yes, Herbert, since you have discovered to me that you are not my brother, I will no longer conceal the secret of my soul, but own that you are the adored possessor of my love.

AM. (*Astonished and agitated.*) How! not your brother, the possessor of your love?

EL. Oh, sir!

HER. Calm yourself, Elinor—speak not—be mine the task to answer for my conduct.

AM. What is it I have heard?

HER. The truth.

AM. You are not her brother?

HER. I am not.

AM. You love her?

HER. More than life.

AM. Herbert, you called me friend, yet you have deceived me; you received all my confidence—all your confidence has been withheld. I could have forgiven you your anger, I could have forgiven you my blighted hopes, but to have exposed me to the torture of making you both miserable, that I never will forgive.

HER. Hear me, Ambrose.

AM. I won't hear a word. (*crosses to* C.) By this promise, this written promise she is mine—mine.

HER. Stay, Ambrose, you shall not stir; by the honor and faith of man, you leave not this house with rancor in your heart.

AM. Stand back, our friendship's over.

HER. Ambrose, I swear—

AM. Why was not this secret disclosed before?

HER. Bear with me, Ambrose—I couldn't. Years ago, justice urged me to disclose all, and tell Elinor herself, that she was not my sister, but I could not endure to renounce the dear tie that perhaps would have parted us forever. Accustomed to have her near me, she became necessary to my happiness. As she grew up, the fear of a disclosure kept me still

silent, and longer might this concealment have lasted but for the events of this day.

Am. If not your sister, who is Elinor? who are her relatives?

Her. I know not. I received her from the arms of her mother, fourteen years ago.

Am. From whom?

Her. Her only surviving parent.

Am. Go on!

El. Proceed, Herbert; pray, proceed.

Her. Fourteen years ago, I began my wild career of life on board of a privateer. I was perhaps the wildest and most reckless youth in the service. Feared by my comrades for my boldness, and disliked for my superiority, I was on the point of falling a victim to treachery, when one day we boarded a Galleon, richly laden. The action was terrible, and in the moment of victory the conquered ship became a blaze of fire. Led by a female shriek, I darted into the cabin and snatched up a woman with a child in her arms, apparently four or five years old. The flames came rapidly on the magazine, which rendered further assistance to those on board, hopeless. The vessel was abandoned to the devouring element, and in a few moments her disjointed planks floated on the water.

Am. Fourteen years ago, say you?

Her. Fourteen. The woman I saved was evidently dying. She called me to her side, and inquired, "Brave youth, who are you?" Herbert, a simple sailor "Herbert, I bequeath my daughter to you, she will shortly be an orphan, she has relations in Russia, this small casket contains information of them. Abandon her not, be to her a protector—a brother—and forget not that a day will come, when an account will be required at your hands."

Am. Where is that casket?

Her. Lost, in the confusion of the moment it fell overboard I looked upon the dying mother, as she implored Heaven's blessing on her child, and became from that moment a better man. I disembarked with my little treasure on my arm—I called her sister, and for seven years all I gained in my sea cruises was devoted to her education. She was about ten, and I twenty-three, when we became acquainted with you, you, my only friend—with whom for upwards of seven years we have lived in happiness and friendship.

Am. Herbert, tell me, what was the name of the conquered vessel?

Her. Name, let me remember.

Am. Was it the Argonaut?

Her. It was.

Am. Merciful heaven!

Her. Ambrose, my friend, why this agitation?

Am. In that very vessel, fourteen years ago, my mother, with her female child, and all on board, was reported to have perished. Oh, that some clue would lead to the disclosure of Elinor's real name!

Her. That is hopeless. (*Goes to the bureau and takes out paper and miniature.*) In case of my death I had written down here, every particular of that dreadful hour,—this miniature was round Elinor's neck.

Am. (*Taking it.*) 'Twas her mother's. (*Crosses to* Elinor.) Elinor, sister, sister! rightly did nature incite me to love you. Herbert, bless you, bless you, for this gift.

Her. Ambrose, I cannot speak, the brother of my friendship, the woman of my adoration. I am supremely happy.

[*Ready to strike two o'clock.*

Enter Rose *and* Valentine, c. d.

Rose. 'Tis two o'clock, brother, the coach is at the door, make haste, or we shall not be married at all.

Val. I shall die if you don't be quick.

Am. Rose, I have lost a wife, but I have found a sister.

Rose. A sister! dear, I'm so happy.

Am. Ay. Elinor, she is our sister. [*Ladies embrace.*

Val. Well, I declare, that's another surprise, on my wedding-day.

El. Oh! my brother! my husband! now my lot is blessed indeed.

Am. Herbert, nobly have you deserved my sister. There, she is your's—we shall be brother's still, you see; your Elinor is mine, my Elinor is your's. May our partnership flourish, and guided by the Rule of Three, may our accounts be duly kept, our products multiplied, and let us still hope to maintain the credit of this our old established house, so that the public at large may not refuse to answer our drafts, when they see at the bottom of our bills the joint names of the

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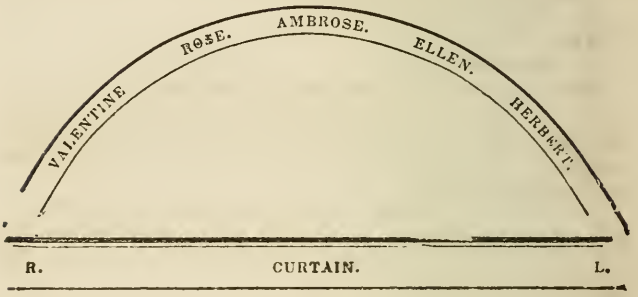

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